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IT HAS NOW BECOME thoroughly clear that the so-called National Conference of Business and Industrial Committes is in essence nothing more than a part of Mr. Hoover's campaign for reelection. Its program is vague to the point of absurdity; its tone is that of a salesmen's pep meeting. All it proposes is somehow to force still more credit down the throat of a business structure already sick from an excess of debt, and to employ more men, not at the expense of employers, but of the workers who still have jobs, by asking them to give up part of their part-time to others. If there is any fundamental difference between the present conference and the completely abortive conferences called by the President in late 1929 we should like to know what it is. We do not believe the American voter is going to be easily fooled by such tactics, even though a few Democrats like Owen D. Young have allowed themselves to be used. Recent straw votes point so uniformly in the same direction that they can no longer be ignored. The Democratic National Committee has given out a list of nearly a dozen such straw votes, which reveal Roosevelt leading Hoover in the average ratio of three to one, with Roosevelt taking an amazing lead in polls conducted by the Western newspapers. But will these hopeful voters receive any better treatment at the hands of the Democrats? Perhaps, though certainly not on the prohibition question. In his speech at Sea Girt, New Jersey, Roosevelt was at pains to show that the Democratic position on prohibition differs but little from that of the Republicans. He seemed offended by Hoover's suggestion that the Democrats were not promising the drys as much as the Republicans.

MR. HOOVER SEEMS TO HAVE MADE rather a sorry mess of his prohibition strategy. He was to catch the wet vote by promising to do away with national prohibition and the dry vote by promising federal protection to all States that want to retain prohibition for themselves. But apparently neither the wets nor the drys want to play with him on that basis. This is especially true of the drys. All but one of the prohibition organizations have decided that they will support neither Mr. Hoover nor Governor Roosevelt, but will instead work for the election of Senators and Congressmen pledged to defend the Eighteenth Amendment. The single exception is the organization calling itself the Allied Forces, the chairman of which is Dr. Daniel A. Poling. It is doubtless not entirely a coincidence that many of the sponsors of the Allied Forces are also Republican politicians. In any event Dr. Poling promised Mr. Hoover the support of this group, not neglecting to mention, of course, that the Allied Forces represent prohibition societies with a total of 1,500,000 members, all of whom presumably are voters. Grateful for this promised support, the Republican nominee promptly penned an ecstatic note of thanks, asserting that Dr. Poling and Mr. Hoover were fighting on common ground against the materialism of the age. We must, he said, "shift our drift from materialism to a higher note of individual and national ideals." But in promising to support Mr. Hoover even the Allied Forces played safe. Dr. Poling's pledge, in the words of the New York *Herald Tribune*, "reserved" for the Allied Forces "the right to fight repeal" of the Eighteenth Amendment. Ardent prohibitionists could hardly ask for less.

THE BONUS ARMY WAS DRIVEN OUT of Washington only recently but the Hoover Administration is already reaping its reward. Everywhere State conventions of the American Legion are demanding that the adjusted compensation certificates be paid in full as soon as Congress reconvenes. The latest to take action was the New York State branch of the Legion, which by a vote of 499 to 138 demanded "immediate payment" of the bonus. There is little doubt that at its national convention this month the American Legion will reverse its decision of last year when under pressure from Washington it voted against the bonus. The inhumane display of force, which took place on July 28 and which was intended to show the country that American institutions were safe in the keeping of Mr. Hoover's firm hand, has turned out to be a virtually unprecedented measure of political stupidity. The Hoover forces have been driven almost to desperation by the reaction. No other explanation can be found for the ridiculous and demonstrably false assertions made by F. Trubee Davison, Assistant Secretary of War, before the New York State convention of the Legion. He repeated the Hoover-Hurley charge that the bonus army was composed largely of "Communists and criminals," and announced the discovery of a secret printing press from which forged army discharge papers had been turned out by the wholesale. This in face of the fact that the Veterans' Bureau, by checking its own records, had satisfied itself that at least 94 per cent of the

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bonus-seekers in Washington were bona fide veterans. No wonder Davison was subjected to heckling and boos from the floor and the galleries.

CHANCELLOR VON PAPEN has worked out an exceedingly intricate and somewhat confusing scheme for the financial salvation of Germany. Before these lines appear his program will probably have become law through an emergency decree issued by President Hindenburg. His plan is briefly this: All taxes will be collected in the usual manner in the year beginning October 1, but certain of these taxes, including the turnover and real-estate taxes, which are "especially obstructive to the productive process," will be refunded in the form of credit bills. In other words, instead of paying taxes the industrialists and land-owners will be in effect lending money to the government; instead of receiving tax receipts they will get credit certificates from the government upon which they themselves can borrow money at the bank. Von Papen frankly admitted that he was gambling on the return of world-wide prosperity before the end of the next year. If the industrialists and Junkers are not able to repay the loans obtained on the strength of the credit bills, the government as guarantor of these certificates will have to take up the debts, which may amount to as much as 1,500,000,000 Reichsmarks. If prosperity fails to return, and the government is unable to meet these bank loans, the whole German financial structure will be imperiled by this novel scheme. A similar plan is to be initiated for the purpose of stimulating employment. Moreover, "the employer hiring additional men will be authorized to pay less than the present collective wage rates. The more men he hires, the lower wages he will be permitted to pay." Favoritism for the industrialists and Junkers, further penalties for the working class—nothing better could have been expected from the present government; and even then there is grave doubt that the Von Papen program will do any more than increase the economic chaos in Germany.

THE NATIONALISTS OF GERMANY have tried for fifteen years to silence Professor Eric Gumbel, one of the most courageous liberals and pacifists of that country. At last they have succeeded in having him removed from the chair of political economy at Heidelberg. But if they believe that that will silence him, they will surely be disappointed. Professor Gumbel was one of the few Germans who had the courage to denounce and oppose the war. In 1919 he dared write a book, which he audaciously titled "Four Years of Lies," charging the rulers of his country with having resorted to trickery and deceit to keep the war spirit alive. The following year he published "Two Years of Murder," in which he depicted the senseless slaughter with which both the revolutionary and reactionary elements prosecuted the civil war that followed the armistice. In one of his most recent books he cited three hundred political killings to prove his charge that "fascists are murderers." Obviously he made enemies of the National Socialists. They tried in every way to persuade the Ministry of Education in the state of Baden, which still has a republican government, to dismiss this outspoken educator. That they succeeded shows all too clearly the tremendous influence the rise of fascism has had on even the moderate and liberal public men of Germany. Pacifism, liberalism, and honest criticism are having to give way before the mad, jingoistic nationalism of the Hitlerites. This is taking place even though the fascists have not yet come into power. What a menace to world peace Germany will be, if and when they take over the government.

HENRY W. L. DANA, a pacifist with radical social ideas, has been refused permission to land in Great Britain—reportedly because of his political views—by the government of Ramsay MacDonald who came first into fame and power as a pacifist with radical social ideas. Dr. Dana has gone on to Amsterdam to attend a world congress against war. A dozen years ago Mr. MacDonald might have been going to the same congress himself. Today, in the name of the empire, he is collaborating with his elegant Tory cabinet-mates in building a wall against free trade not only in merchandise but in ideas as well. It is a long way from socialism—even the "gradual" sort—to the dazzling grandeur of a Tory cabinet on the right hand (not the left) of the King himself. It might be blinding to almost any human being. Yet it is hard to understand how Ramsay MacDonald can fail to see how ridiculous it is that the British Empire should be afraid of pacifists with radical social ideas.

AMELIA EARHART is a lady after our own heart. Her latest exploit of flying the continent in nineteen hours without a single stop compels us to bow low to her in homage. What we like about her is that she is so extremely well-behaved about it all. There is never any blare of trumpets before she starts off on one of her record-breaking flights, and after them she refuses to give foolish interviews to the press and let herself be exploited. Yet we have a suspicion that she is not above being a financial victim of the depression. The point is that she does whatever she undertakes in the most workmanlike way and then seems to forget all about it and begins to make plans for her next job. She has certainly contributed enormously to the final breaking down of the old theory that women do not have the endurance to undertake great physical feats. What, we wonder, would Jane Austen have thought if some one had told her that the day would come when a woman would fly by herself across the Atlantic Ocean and think nothing of spanning the American continent in one hop of nineteen consecutive hours—without taking with her a single bottle of smelling salts or Eau de Cologne or any remedy for the migraines or the vapors. Even if Jane Austen could have been made to believe that, she could certainly not have been persuaded to believe that the vixen who could put this over would also prove to be a singularly modest, unassuming, and winsome young woman.

HAIL TO ALFRED E. SMITH, contributing editor of the *New Outlook!* We began to think that he was harboring literary aspirations when he was good enough to review in our issue of August 17 Morrie Ryskind's "The Diary of an ex-President," but we were not prepared for so deep a plunge. To say that we wish him success is to put it mildly. With such a contributing editor the *New Outlook's* circulation ought to rival that of the old *Outlook* in the days when the redoubtable T. R. shook his big stick, which wasn't so big after all, through its pages. Certainly, Alfred E. Smith has a following that every editor must long

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for. We even have a sneaking suspicion that Editor Alfred E. Smith will learn a lot. There is nothing like having to put your opinions down in black and white at regular intervals to fortify you in what knowledge you may have and to induce you to acquire more. It may even be that if he really goes into the matter of new outlooks, he will find that there are whole worlds into which he has not yet trod, of which he has probably not been even dimly aware. But let him beware. If he ventures too far, he may become as wickedly radical as his friends and well-wishers, the editors of *The Nation*.

IT IS APPROPRIATE that John Macy, who was literary editor of *The Nation* in 1922 and 1923, should have died while delivering a course of lectures under the title "Revolution and Rebellion in Classical American Literature" and that he was giving the course at the summer camp of a group of workers—the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. For Macy early became a Socialist, and saw literature always to some extent in that social and economic context so much emphasized in literary criticism in the last two years. This was evident in "The Spirit of American Literature," published in 1913, in which he revalued the leading historic figures in our national letters both from a romantic and a social standpoint. In dealing with a ruling god like Howells, Macy insisted that he did not know life because he would not know "how to sit down and eat his grub with a bunch of workmen and find out what they think of things." Macy's book helped to raise the current reputation of Whitman in particular; it was a pioneer volume in the attack, which H. L. Mencken was later to carry much further, against the genteel tradition dominant then not only in the universities but in most current criticism. It ridiculed the pretensions of literature that did not draw "the grand passions, sexual or other." If it seems a very quiet and moderate book to most readers today, it is only because the point of view for which it argued has now been so widely accepted.

THE DIVERSE UTOPIAS imagined by what is called the mind of man resemble one another in only one respect—no sane person would want to live in any of them. As Schopenhauer remarked, adequate hells are easy to imagine, but no heaven quite good enough to spend even a long life in has ever been described, and Mr. Huxley's "brave new world" is scarcely less inviting than the futures seriously outlined by less sardonic prophets. It is, therefore, quite a relief to notice that in addressing the sixth International Congress of Genetics J. B. S. Haldane ridicules the idea that it is possible to establish any "perfect" type of man which society should undertake to breed. "I don't believe in uniformity," he said, according to the *Herald Tribune*. "Among dogs you have all sorts of breeds—shepherd dogs, dachshunds, St. Bernards, and various other kinds. What makes human life amusing is getting different types all in one family. One hope for humanity is that this sort of thing should go on." It is true, of course, that the human dachshunds, poodles, and Pekingese turned out by nature sometimes make one question either her sobriety or her kindliness, but, on the whole, we should rather trust her than allow the grim scientists to populate the globe with a single breed of dully virtuous collies.

Japan's Challenge

JAPAN has challenged the new Stimson peace doctrine. Through Foreign Minister Uchida, Japan has given notice that it intends to approve the new territorial arrangement in Manchuria, that is to say, it intends to recognize the "independent" government of Manchukuo. Everyone knows that this supposedly independent state is the creature of Japanese militarism; all neutral observers are agreed that Manchukuo would automatically pass out of existence with the withdrawal of Japanese military support. Even ignoring the precedent Japan established in Korea, it is hardly enough for Count Uchida to say that Japan is not "seeking to annex Manchuria or otherwise satisfy her thirst for land." The fact remains that in violation of the Washington treaties and the Kellogg Pact the Japanese have by force of arms set up a puppet government in a section of Asia which the United States, Great Britain, and other Powers have long considered an integral part of China. It was just such a partition of China that the Washington treaties were designed to prevent. Secretary Stimson has three times declared that the United States will never recognize any territorial or other arrangement arrived at in violation of these treaties or the Kellogg Pact. The test of this policy will come when Japan formally acknowledges the existence of an independent Manchurian government, which it has itself created.

Obviously a challenge of this nature must be met, if the peace treaties are to survive. But it cannot be met by resort to war, for that would defeat the very purpose of the Stimson doctrine. It can only be met by the pressure of world opinion united against treaty violators. The United States has put forward a practical and just method of dealing with this situation, but some of the great European Powers, notably England and France, remain ominously silent. True, their delegates in the League Assembly did join with the representatives from forty-eight other nations in approving a resolution indorsing the Stimson doctrine, but neither Downing Street nor the Quai d'Orsay has to date publicly declared that it would support the State Department in refusing to give international sanction to Japanese gains in Manchuria. Nor has either suggested any other way of dealing with this violation. There is reason to believe that the continued silence of France and England has really encouraged Japan to take a determined stand against the Stimson doctrine.

It is now reported that "because of anxiety in high quarters over what is regarded as growing tension in Japanese-American relations," Vice-Admiral Kichisaburo Nomura will be sent to the United States on a "good-will mission." We shall welcome Admiral Nomura. He will learn much here that ought to help his government rid itself of its false notions concerning the American attitude toward the Manchurian question. He will learn, to begin with, that there is no "growing tension in Japanese-American relations" except that which arises from America's insistence upon faithful observance of the peace treaties. Japan can correct that upon its own initiative. If Tokio does so, it will promote genuine good-will between the two countries. And that is all the State Department desires.

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Prosperity by Headlines

THE main lines of Mr. Hoover's economic policy and campaign strategy—for he has made the two identical—have now become plain. The depression is to be exorcised by a trick of grammar. The word has apparently gone out to all the trained seals of the party that the depression is never to be referred to except in the past tense. This, of course, is the same strategy that Mr. Hoover has been following for the last three years. It has the merit that no matter how often it is exposed, there is always the possibility that it may work the next time. Because the policy has now been resumed with more thoroughness and brazenness than ever, it may be well to set down here once more a series of earlier Hoover statements:

December 3, 1929: "We have reestablished confidence."

March 7, 1930: "All the evidence indicates that the worst effects of the crash and unemployment will have passed during the next thirty days."

May 1, 1930: "We have now passed the worst."

December 2, 1930: "We have already weathered the worst of the storm."

One would think that Mr. Hoover would become discouraged, but the technique was resumed in all its original vigor in his acceptance speech, and in his address to the latest "prosperity conference" on August 26—"We have overcome the major financial crisis"—and is now imposed on all his lieutenants. "I am aware of the suffering our people *have* undergone," broadcasts Mr. Chapin, the new Secretary of Commerce, on August 21. "The American people," he continues, "are still very much on their feet after a series of shocks that might well have made them stagger, but that were finally resisted in a way that astonished the world." Secretary Chapin might tell us just which American people are still on their feet. The farmers in Iowa and elsewhere now driven by desperation to direct action? The 11,000,000 unemployed and all their dependents, as moderately estimated by the American Federation of Labor? The forty-five out of every one hundred factory workers employed in 1926, now jobless, as reported for July by the federal government's own official figures? The workers still employed who have had both their wages and their hours reduced, so that factory workers as a whole are now receiving—again according to the federal government's own figures—only thirty-six cents for every dollar they were getting in 1926?

Perhaps the most astounding attempt to talk the depression into the past tense has come from the Washington correspondent, Mark Sullivan. It appeared in the New York *Herald-Tribune* of August 10, the President's birthday.

> There is symbolism [chanted Mr. Sullivan] in the coinciding of President Hoover's birthday, August 10, with the assured ending of the series of shocks. . . . Somewhere between about July 10 and this week is a day which, as definitely and certainly as Armistice Day at the close of the war, marked the end of this three years of economic convulsion. How serious it has been is not realized even by those individuals who have suffered terribly from it.

The men and women who have been out of work for two or three years can now reflect how lucky they were not to have realized the seriousness of their condition. That, apparently, had been realized only by the bankers, the industrial magnates, and Mr. Hoover. "To an extraordinary degree, not even faintly understood," continued Mr. Sullivan, "the President of the United States bore the brunt." He bore it, as the Chicago *Tribune* has shown, by drawing the unprecedented average of $539,000 a year from the Treasury for his White House expenditures. Little wonder that the unemployed can only faintly understand such a brunt.

Not satisfied with throwing the depression gaily into the past tense, the Hoover satellites constantly distort and contradict even current official statistics. When the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics itself reports that in July employment fell off 3.4 per cent, leaving only fifty-five men employed for every one hundred employed in 1926, the United States Employment Service announces an "expansion of industrial activity" in that month, a course which Miss Frances Perkins, New York State Industrial Commissioner, has characterized as "cruel and irresponsible . . . particularly at a time when the unemployed are reaching the end of their resources and when cities, States, and private organizations are attempting to raise the funds for relief for the next winter."

The plain truth about the "business revival" we have so far experienced is that it has been almost entirely confined to the speculative markets, to Republican campaign statements, and to newspaper headlines. Whenever we glance at the actual statistics we find a different story. The New York *Times's* index of business activity, based on an average of railway freight-car loadings, steel-mill activity, electric power, automobile, and carded cotton-cloth production, showed business activity as of August 20 at 52.2 per cent of normal, the lowest point it has yet touched.

One might charitably attribute all this complacent optimism to the naive belief, which persists in spite of a thousand rebuffs, that prosperity can be brought back through the process of convincing enough people that its return is near and inevitable. Even when we make this charitable assumption, we cannot overlook its implications. The first of them is that we can get prosperity back without correcting a single one of the fundamental evils that forced the depression upon us. Instead of reducing tariffs, adjusting war debts, curbing financial buccaneers, addressing ourselves to the vital problems of the distribution of wealth, all we need, these optimists believe, is a few pep meetings and more injections of government credit. A more sinister implication still is that once we can convince everybody that the corner has been turned, it will really not be necessary to concern ourselves with the problem of relief. Presumably if we could get 1,000,000 men back to work in the next six months, we should not need to bother our heads about the 10,000,000 still walking the streets. This is the shocking callousness that lies behind all the official "patriotic" optimism. But headlines cannot feed the hungry. Mr. Hoover's plain duty is to summon Congress for the immediate appropriation, not of a ridiculous $300,000,000, but of a sum at least ten times that size, a sum that would provide at least a bare subsistence for the unemployed and the starving.

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Toward a New System

MODERN technology harnessed to an outmoded social technique and an obsolete political theory is shattering our social structure. Unemployment is certain to increase, perhaps involving 20,000,000 workers within the next two years; our already staggering debt burden will grow still larger; our industrial organization is being quickly undermined—such, in any case, is the mature judgment of a group of prominent engineers who ten years ago set out to determine for themselves what effect the rapid development of technology in the machine age was having upon our social, political, and industrial lives. This group, which has organized itself under the name of Technocracy, includes such outstanding men as Howard Scott, consulting engineer who has been a technician for the Muscle Shoals project; Robert L. Davison, housing engineer; Dr. Richard Tolman, professor of physics at the California Institute of Technology; and Professor Walter Rautenstrauch, head of the department of industrial engineering at Columbia University. Before they died Charles P. Steinmetz and Thorstein Veblen were members of Technocracy. In the report based upon their decade of study these engineers asserted:

> Our charts prove with startling vividness that the impact of technology on the price system is shattering the social structure. The production curve oscillates to the breaking point. When the crisis comes, no palliatives of a political nature will be adequate, because the problem is not political, but technical. Orators may appeal to and sway manpower, but they are impotent when it comes to handling energy. Neither socialism, communism, nor fascism is equipped to do this job in a society as highly technical as America today.

Nor do the engineers see any more hope in the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, the five-day week, or the various low-cost housing schemes, for these amount only to a "reshuffling of the cards," and do not get at fundamental causes. The present system is doomed, the engineers agreed, "and a new system of standards must be erected in order to deal with the physical conditions which have arrived by virtue of this hodgepodge created by the impact of technology on an old and outmoded social technique."

As yet Technocracy has not pointed the way to this new system. Just who is to bring about the necessary changes? Will they come gradually, by legislation and similar means, and, if so, will they arrive before the old system cracks and falls? Or must they be accompanied by violent revolution? But of one thing there can be no doubt. No reform of our economic and social structure can possibly succeed, whether it is undertaken by liberals or Socialists, who prefer constitutional or at least legalistic methods, or by Communists or fascists, who lean toward direct action, unless the reforming party has a thorough grasp of the technological problems involved. We are today the most intensively industrialized country in the world. Our complex political, social, and industrial machinery cannot be operated by philosophic theories alone. The new rulers must have scientific guidance and technical assistance as well. Technocracy's report is the first step toward a genuine revolutionary philosophy for America.

Geography

GEOGRAPHY, when we were young, was completely concealed by a plane surface divided by arbitrary lines into patches arbitrarily colored on which, in our imagination, were piled vast quantities of cotton in bales or bananas in bunches, otherwise known as exports and imports; just as the mysterious world of music was shut off by two impenetrable fences known as the treble and bass clefs on which were perched spheroids equipped with flag poles and invariably known as do, re, me, fa, sol, la, and ti.

Geography is only beginning to be popularized or even humanized—such books, for instance, as "Van Loon's Geography" are all too rare. As a result Americans as a people are immensely ignorant of the geography not only of the world but even of their own United States. It may be in part the result of having too much geography, what with two major sea coasts and Texas. Whatever the reason, ask any man you know, except perhaps an Iowan, to "bound" Iowa. There is only one chance in ten that he can do it right off, and very likely he will not be able to do it at all. There is, of course, no rational reason why he should be able to "bound" Iowa, since the idea is quite irrelevant to his experience. And it is only necessary to remember what a large part such silly exercises play in the teaching of geography to know why ignorance of it is so widespread.

Maps in themselves are beautiful. But since they have only an intellectual relation to the rocks, dirt, and water of which the world is made, it is no wonder that a child gets the idea too firmly fixed ever to be quite wiped out that he must cross a black line going from Idaho into Montana and that India and Afghanistan are forever and literally divided by another black line on one side of which is to be found a bright red world and on the other a nondescript grey-green one. As for the shape of the earth, we know well enough that it is a spheroid. Yet because of an early overdose of maps we shall never be able to visualize it as anything but a flat and static piece of gaily colored stuff from which patterns for vast and strange designs have been cut out.

We thoroughly approve of Mr. Van Loon's definition of geography as the

> study of man in search of food and shelter and leisure for himself and for his family and an attempt to find out the way in which that man has either adapted himself to his background or has reshaped his physical surroundings in order to be as comfortable and well-nourished and happy as seemed compatible with his own limited strength.

As for the pictures which adorn his book, they are more enlightening as well as more exciting than anything we were ever allowed to connect with geography. To see a series of Van Loon pictures showing the mechanics of an earthquake is as good as experiencing one—in fact a great deal better. Because through his representation of the Gulf Stream one can almost feel its warmth, one is in a fair way to remembering why it is, and his pictures of how the Atlantic and the Pacific and the British Channel would look if they should run dry are as revealing as they are unforgettable.

We are glad that geography is being given a chance to develop its possibilities as an art after the dullness it has enjoyed as a science. The children, at least, will be grateful.

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THE POT AND THE KETTLE

Prophecies, Straw Votes, and Campaign Chests*

I SEE that Will Rogers claims that he is the only man in the United States who does not know who is going to be the next President. Everybody he meets knows and assures him with unquestioned certainty of opinion that it will be Roosevelt or that it will be Hoover. I, too, do not wish to pose as the seventh son of the seventh son, but I wonder whether the surety of the people Will Rogers meets is not due to the fact that one side is certain that we are not going to break with the historic American tradition of turning out the party in power when evil befalls us, while the other is determined that it will hold on to the special privileges which it has got, and keep in office a man who has shown for four years that he can be trusted in the long run to do every single thing that the real owners of the country, the great capitalists, demand of him. So much can happen in the two months that lie between us and the election that it is idle indeed to prophesy. Yet if I were forced to give an opinion I should unhesitatingly side with the verdict of all the straw ballots that I have so far seen or heard of. Roosevelt leads—tremendously—in them all.

That the rich, present and past, the well-to-do, all who are affiliated with the institution of property are willing to chance it again with Hoover is true. They think that the tide has turned. They do not deny that Hoover lied to the American people at the beginning of the trouble, but they insist that if he had not lied we should have had a veritable panic and an even greater collapse. Some think that he has done his worst and that from now on things will go better. They ring the changes on that dreadful saying of Lincoln's about swapping horses while crossing the stream—I wish I dared print here a joyously obscene modification of it attributed to one Alfred E. Smith! But for all that I am about convinced, as things stand, that these conservative citizens of ours are going to be out-voted by the twelve or more millions of Americans who are out of jobs and the millions more who are sick and tired of the whole Hoover philosophy and conception of American life and ideals. In other words, it would appear at present as if the plain American people were going to have their innings this time and that we are in for a change.

Oh yes, I know that superhuman efforts are going to be made to put the Republican Party over once more. The present rise in the stock market—if it lasts—will help them, and we may count upon another boom just before election to send the quotations up further. The newspapers will again be full of stories of the companies that are increasing the number of their employed and perhaps will again bury under utterly misleading headlines the fact that the steel business of the country is operating at only 14 per cent, that unemployment is greater, and that the official figures show that the actual wages paid are at a lower figure than ever before. Wherever I go I talk with the various people with whom I deal or come into contact. They no longer believe what is in the papers; all the shopkeepers tell you that conditions are worse. It was a parking-place keeper in Hartford who told me the other day, the minute I drove in, that his price was only fifteen cents for three hours parking and then added that if Herbert Hoover came into office again, he would certainly have to close up his place. One Connecticut brass concern was recently reported as having added several hundred men to those employed. The dispatch failed to add that 6,600 other employees of this company have been working four days a month, six hours in a day. These men vote for Herbert Hoover? I cannot believe it and neither can my friend, the Italian bootblack, who says that the five votes in his family which went to Hoover four years ago are going to Roosevelt this year.

But far beyond these individual signs which may well be deceptive, however often multiplied, are certain facts as to the Republican situation which cannot be denied. For years past, as the political chart shows, victory at the polls has had a distinct relation to the size of the campaign chest of the winning party. I have no doubt that the Republicans will raise far more money than will the Democrats, but it is likely to be the smallest campaign fund in generations. More than that, the Democrats have not in years needed a campaign fund so little. Roosevelt is going to be elected, if chosen, because of the horrible suffering that multitudes of Americans have undergone since 1929. The facts are there. They are known to the plain people of America, who see men starving before their eyes. Mr. Hoover may think that there is no cold and hunger and suffering in the country. Every time he says it he loses votes.

Again, the Republicans cannot raise the cry of dangerous radicalism that they expected to bring out when Franklin Roosevelt was nominated. Mayor Walker has dealt them a dreadful blow by giving Governor Roosevelt his chance to shine as a remarkably self-controlled, a dignified, and an able judge. Again, if he keeps the level of his speeches up to that of his recent utterance at Columbus, it will be impossible for the Republicans to describe him either as a dangerous demagogue or a wild-eyed visionary. Not that the Governor was anything like definite enough in his remedies. His program makes a real liberal smile. But the Republicans cannot pin upon him the sort of label they were able to attach to the name of La Follette because La Follette championed Lincoln's idea of popular control of the Supreme Court, or upon Theodore Roosevelt, the Bull Mooser of 1912, when he came out for the recall of judicial decisions. I wish it were otherwise, heaven knows. I wish that Roosevelt had a strong, radical program to invite the bitterest attacks of his political enemies. I am only recording the fact that he has spiked their guns at half a dozen different points; he has made it quite impossible for them to classify him as

* The first of a series of weekly comments on the election which will appear during the campaign.

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another La Follette or Theodore Roosevelt on the loose.

The pity of it all is that at bottom it is only the pot attacking the kettle, and the kettle attacking the pot, and that fundamentally, as I have said before, the American people are not going to gain by a change. It will be like a breath of fresh air to clean out the White House and the Cabinet room, but when it comes to expecting any deep-seated constructive measures, that is beyond the possible when one looks at the corrupt and crooked Democratic Party, devoid of all principle, recalls the very great limitations of that charming gentleman Franklin D. Roosevelt, and remembers how little Woodrow Wilson's crusade to free America from "its masters, the great capitalists" achieved.

OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

The Farmers' Rebellion

By WAYNE GARD

STANDPAT politicians in the Middle West, as well as farm creditors, have been quaking in their boots at the unexpected enthusiasm generated by the agrarian strike. While the farm-holiday project has made but little headway toward its major objective, the movement has spread like wildfire across the prairies, bringing into flame a rebellion that had been smoldering a long time. Henry A. Wallace, editor of *Wallace's Farmer,* views the crusade as a gesture which, without immediate import, may attain a far-reaching significance.

Torpedoes, tear gas, rotten eggs, brickbats, and planks spiked to puncture truck tires figure in this latest effort of corn-belt farmers to boost the prices of their products to the cost of production. Declaring a holiday on selling, thousands of farmers have been picketing the roads to "persuade" their neighbors to join in holding back produce for higher offers. The movement began quietly but soon was dramatized by the dumping of several truckloads of milk on a road outside Sioux City, Iowa. The pickets allowed milk and cream for hospitals to enter, however, and they donated 2,200 gallons of milk to the unemployed. Suddenly realizing that 90 per cent of the shipments from nearby milk-producers had been cut off, Sioux City people began frantically to order milk shipped by train from Omaha and to have the blockade run by trucks bearing armed deputy sheriffs. This local milk war soon ended in a price compromise, but it gave impetus and publicity to the more widespread and more inclusive program of the National Farmers' Holiday Association with which it was not directly connected.

The holding back of produce in an attempt to force prices up has often been advocated in the corn belt; but it has seldom been tried, mainly because the farmers have not been united and because so few of them have had enough cash, credit, or storage facilities to withhold their produce for any long period. The current farm strike had its inception in agitation by Milo Reno, kingfish of the Iowa Farmers' Union, and by John Chalmers, a Boone County farmer who is vice-president of the union. At Boone last February, a local meeting drew one thousand farmers and led to the calling of a State meeting. This conclave was held in Des Moines in May, with about ten thousand present. Here the National Farmers' Holiday Association was born, with Reno as its temporary head.

A thirty-day holiday on farm selling was begun August 8 and later was extended indefinitely. Thus far, the strike has centered mainly about the Sioux City and Omaha markets, but lately it has spread into the Dakotas, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois. At the height of the Sioux City milk war, two thousand sunburned and overall-clad farmers were living in tent colonies along the nine trunk highways leading to that city. Some were armed with pitchforks for use on truck tires. But except for sporadic outbreaks the picketing has been peaceful, and truck drivers not amenable to argument have been allowed to pass on. On August 17, a crowd of 450 farmers, equipped with clubs and brickbats, tried to remove animals from stockyard pens in Sioux City and from trucks which had run the blockade, but this attempt was repulsed by deputy sheriffs and city policemen.

Skirmishes have taken place along some of the roads. At one point outside Sioux City, pickets stopped trucks by spreading across the pavement a section of threshing-machine belt studded with menacing spikes, but this weapon was later confiscated by deputy sheriffs. In other instances, roads were blocked with railroad ties, logs, boulders, or cables. A few windshields were shattered with rocks or clubs and one sheriff was overpowered, and his gun taken from him, after he had fired a shot to warn the pickets.

Yet, in spite of such incidents, resort to force has been exceptional. The usual method of stopping trucks has been for a mass of men to stand doggedly upon the highway, in the manner of Gandhi's followers, defying the truck-drivers to crash into them. Since the drivers do not want to be guilty of manslaughter, they always stop, though some—not influenced by the arguments of the pickets—later drive on. Some of the picket forces have included women. The two rules of the patrols are "no guns and no liquor."

The picket groups have been even more active by night than by day, since much of the rural trucking is habitually done at night. Many of the picket squads have been without recognized leaders. The men come and go as they wish, but many have been on duty almost continuously.

"I'll stay till corn pickin'," one farmer declared.

"Till corn pickin'?" said another. "What do you care about corn pickin'? No use doin' all that work the way things are now."

Cars and trucks other than those bearing farm produce to market are, of course, allowed to proceed without molestation. One truck-driver, headed for Sioux City, was allowed to pass unharmed when his load was found to consist of thirty one-gallon jugs of whiskey.

At Council Bluffs, fifty-five pickets, jailed on a charge of unlawful assembly, were released after a crowd of one thousand farmers had threatened to storm the jail, which had been surrounded by officers armed with machine guns. Preparations have been made for sending a unit of the Iowa National Guard to that city. One sheriff has boasted, "We

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are going to stop this picketing if we have to enlist 50,000 deputies to do it." The pickets, he declared, "are hoodlums just as much as are Chicago gangsters." Other sheriffs and deputies, however, have been more sympathetic with the strike, and some have conveniently looked the other way when trucks were turned back.

Thus far, the strike has affected prices only locally and sporadically. Hog receipts have been almost halved in Sioux City, and in some towns a shortage of vegetables has sent residents scampering to their own or their neighbors' gardens or has forced them to use more tinned food. But considered on a national scale, the farm holiday has neither reduced the available supply, nor raised the price, of any agricultural product. In fact, the prices of wheat and hogs have come down during much of the period in which the sellers' strike has been in progress. In the Sioux City milk fight, the farmers did effect a small gain. Whereas they had been receiving only 2 cents a quart for milk which retailed at 8 cents, the new agreement allows them 3.6 cents and will force consumers to pay 9 cents.

The enthusiasm of the farm-holiday leaders appears, however, to have gained new momentum. "It is a finish fight now," declared Milo Reno as his organization dispatched one hundred emissaries to carry the strike west to Montana and east to Ohio. Even some of New Jersey's potato-growers have joined the movement, which obviously is an effort not so much of radicalism as of desperation.

One of the strikers, who had just gone through a barrage of overripe eggs handled by blockade runners, explained the holiday movement in terms of his own experience:

> I own a farm near Boone. My share of the oats crop from twenty-four acres on this farm was $40. My taxes on this same land amounted to $44.16. Before prices took a jump, I could buy a 400-pound packing sow for 90 cents a hundred, or $3.60. At the same time, I went to a meat market and priced a 20-pound smoked ham. It was $3.20. I told them to go to hell; I'd buy a whole hog and cut off a ham.

The Farmers' Holiday Association, while deploring the use of violence, has reaffirmed its aim to strike for farm prices which will equal the cost of production plus a fair profit. It seeks wheat at $1.36 a bushel, corn at 92 cents, oats at 49 cents, barley at 73 cents, hogs at $11.25 a hundredweight, chickens at 24 cents a pound, and eggs at 35 cents a dozen. The strikers have gained encouragement from Governor Floyd B. Olson of Minnesota, who has declared his willingness to join the governors of other States in a plan, "even martial law," to stop farm marketing until prices rise. But other governors have remained silent or non-committal, and apparently no one has heard a peep from that habitually noisy friend of the farmer, Senator L. J. Dickinson of Iowa.

Thus far, the holiday movement has gained its chief support from the left-wing Farmers' Union. The Farm Bureaus, which have five times as many members in Iowa and which have the less indigent and more conservative farmers, are holding aloof. Even some of the less radical farmers, however, see as much justification for the farm holiday as for the recent bank holidays in which depositors have been induced to waive their withdrawals for a specified period.

The corn-belt insurgents have been following Milo Reno's leadership for a long time. Reno was president of the Iowa Farmers' Union from 1921 to 1930 and is still the driving force of that organization. A belligerent and witty debater, despite his sixty-six years, he assures his hearers that he is "as poor as the rest of you farmers" and rants against the Farm Board and against the compulsory testing of cattle for tuberculosis. He is a McNary-Haugenite, and in 1930 he was an unsuccessful Farmer-Labor candidate for the United States Senate. If someone more responsible than Reno were at the head of the farm-holiday project, the movement might possibly gain a larger degree of support and its political implications might be even more disturbing. Many corn-belt farmers have scant respect for the schemes hatched under Reno's five-gallon Stetson. On the other hand, another leader might have realized the economic futility of such a sellers' strike. From its start, the movement has been doomed. It is pretty certain that farmers will not join the strike in sufficient numbers to curtail the market supply enough to raise prices. And even if prices were raised by the strike, the higher figures would be available only to the bootleg sellers who refused to observe the holiday. At the close of the strike period, with the withheld produce coming on the market again, prices would drop immediately to the former level. The real value of the strike is in its publicizing of the plight of the farmer, the most hard-hit victim of the current deflation.

The saviors of the farmer are many, especially in election years, but most of their panaceas have already been found wanting. The acreage reduction prescribed by the Farm Board has not worked, nor is there much hope for the enactment—or for the success, if enacted—of such radical measures as the equalization fee or the export debenture. The basic principle of these schemes was at the bottom of the Farm Board's price-fixing venture, which met tragic failure.

More could be done than has been in the lowering of farm taxes and the cheapening of farm credit, but tax reduction is not easy and the mere extension of credit will remain only a postponement of calamity as long as selling prices remain below production costs. Farmers hope to gain slightly higher prices upon the completion of the St. Lawrence waterway; but the present treaty may require several years for ratification, and after that six or eight years more will be needed for the construction of the channel. Some benefit might come from a temporary cessation of the government's land-reclamation activities, part of which bring under cultivation more marginal land when too much is already available. Corporation farming often is advocated as a method of reducing farm costs. Yet such farming, while it has in some instances reduced the cost of raising wheat, is less suited to the mixed farming and livestock production of the corn belt. And whatever advantage the possibly inevitable corporation farm may have in normal times, under present conditions the corporation farms are little better off than those of family size. Moreover, the extreme type of corporation farm would not help the present farmer; it would drive him from the land, replacing him with a transient worker.

The farmer's outlook is anything but hopeful. Unless world market conditions or a sharp business upturn boosts the prices of farm products, the mortgage holders and the tax collectors will take over more and more farms, many of which will be abandoned to weeds and hidden stills. And those who keep on trying to make a living by tilling the soil may be driven to measures far more desperate than the current sellers' strike.

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Sabotage at Geneva

By ROBERT DELL

Geneva, August 15

THE disarmament conference adjourned on July 23, leaving everybody who had followed its proceedings at Geneva doubtful whether it would ever meet again. Everybody, that is to say, except Professor Gilbert Murray, who announced in a letter published in the *Manchester Guardian* on July 29 that he had returned from Geneva "inspirited, almost elated." On July 26, the day before Professor Murray's letter was written, General von Schleicher had declared in a broadcast address to the German people that the disarmament conference had been a catastrophic failure, that after its failure nobody expected a miracle to happen and other countries to disarm to the German level, that, this being so, the only alternative was for Germany to reorganize her army, and that this would certainly be done. On August 1 a Roman paper published an article by General Balbo, the Italian Air Minister, in which he declared that all the highest officials of the disarmament conference were creatures of France and England, who had secured complete control of the proceedings and had not given the Italians a chance of making their opinions felt, and that England and the United States had increased their naval armaments before the conference and did not sincerely desire disarmament. He threatened the withdrawal of Italy from the conference and said that the matter would be considered by the Fascist Grand Council. This sufficiently ominous article was closely followed by a still more ominous one signed by Signor Mussolini himself and quite in his old manner. He said by implication that Italy had not been sincere in demanding general disarmament and declared the idea that war could be got rid of to be a delusion.

Thus, within ten days of the adjournment of the disarmament conference, we have a complete change of front on the part of both the German and Italian Governments. Having been at Geneva for the past six months among the strongest advocates of drastic measures of disarmament, these governments have now told the world that it is hopeless to talk about it any more and that for their part they propose to increase their armaments. Both governments have explicitly threatened to withdraw from the disarmament conference. It may be presumed that they will not put their threat into practice before the bureau of the conference meets at Geneva on September 21, but unless there is meanwhile a radical change in British and French policy in this matter that meeting may be the end of the conference—indeed, it probably will be. The situation is critical, and we shall not promote the cause of disarmament by blinking the fact. On the contrary, the only way to save the situation, if it can be saved, is to proclaim the fact from the housetops and try to stir up the French and English peoples to bring the necessary pressure on their respective governments, who with the American Government are responsible for the situation. And the British Government has the heaviest responsibility of all.

Nobody who has followed at all closely and intelligently the lamentable proceedings at Geneva during the past six months can be much surprised at their culmination. The scandal of the "technical" committees was in itself enough to show that the British and French Governments who were responsible for it—the committees having been set up by the joint resolution of Sir John Simon and M. Paul-Boncour on qualitative disarmament—were not sincere and hoped to drown qualitative disarmament, as in fact they did, in a sea of technicalities. General von Schleicher's broadcast address of July 26 was foreshadowed by the marked change in the attitude of the German delegation after the Hindenburg-Von Papen coup d'etat and consequent change of government in Germany. There was nothing new in the claim of equality of status for Germany, which had been made from the first, but there are two ways of realizing equality of status—by reducing the armaments of other countries to the level of those of Germany or by raising German armaments to the level of those of other countries. Before the change of government the German delegation at Geneva was sincerely in favor of the former method: after the change of government the new German delegation was clearly in favor of the latter, while still pretending to desire the disarmament of other countries. It was persistently reported at Geneva that the British delegation encouraged, at least to some extent, the hope that Germany would be allowed to rearm, and all the evidence suggested that the reports were accurate. Given the refusal of the British Government to disarm, it is difficult to see how the British delegation could have taken any other course, for it is clear that equality of status for Germany by one method or the other is inevitable. The French nationalists see that clearly enough. "Pertinax" said in the *Echo de Paris* some months ago that ultimately France would have to choose between an increase in German armaments and a great reduction in her own and showed pretty plainly that he would prefer the former alternative. General von Schleicher's broadcast address is a godsend to the French nationalists. Had he wished to play into their hands, he could not have acted otherwise, and perhaps he did wish to play into their hands, for he certainly wishes to wreck the disarmament conference. It is not at all improbable that both the British admiralty and the French general staff—who are in close touch with the nationalist politicians in France—would prefer German rearmament to a serious reduction in British or French armaments. The French general staff and the French nationalist politicians are not in the least afraid of Germany. They intend to make sure that German armaments shall never catch up with the French, and what they long for is an excuse for walking into Germany and finishing the war which, in their opinion, as M. Poincaré said not long ago, is not finished yet. General von Schleicher has given them a hope that they may sooner or later be provided with the necessary excuse and also an opportunity of scaring the French people out of the desire for disarmament so emphatically expressed last May. The French general staff and their friends, the nationalists, may not be far out in their calculations. The men now in power in Germany are a bad lot, but also a stupid lot. They are in fact the very men whose stupidity dragged Germany into

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the disastrous World War of 1914. They may do it again.

For the abrupt change in Italian policy Sir John Simon has a peculiar personal responsibility and it, too, has not greatly surprised those who watched in powerless dismay his tactics at Geneva. Nothing could be more distasteful to me than personal criticism of Sir John Simon, but the issues at stake are too serious to allow any personal considerations to prevent the telling of the brutal truth. And the brutal truth is that, in the opinion of the vast majority of those who have observed him at Geneva, Sir John Simon is the most unsatisfactory foreign secretary that England has had for some generations and the worst British representative that has appeared at Geneva since the League of Nations came into existence. He has put up the backs of the majority of the delegations and made himself generally distrusted. This distrust may not be justified—I am inclined to think that what appears to be shiftiness is, to a great extent at least, a constitutional inability to get really into touch with people and win their confidence—but the fact remains that it exists and that the feeling against Sir John Simon is such as to make it an almost essential condition of averting the too probable collapse of the disarmament conference that he should not return to Geneva.

I shall not forget the amazement in Paris last autumn, when the League Council met at the Quai d'Orsay to consider the Sino-Japanese conflict, at the discovery that Sir John Simon knew nothing about the history of the Manchurian dispute or of the treaties that defined the respective rights of various Powers in Manchuria. It was presumed in Paris that either Sir John Simon had not been properly briefed by the foreign office or else he had not studied his brief. At Geneva, on the other hand, where he gave the impression of having been briefed rather by the British admiralty than by the foreign office, Sir John Simon had evidently got up his brief remarkably well. And the clever way in which he maneuvered to kill the Hoover proposal without appearing to have any such intention was worthy of his brilliant forensic reputation. He made, however, a great tactical blunder when he initiated the secret conversations between the British, French, and American delegations, and that blunder is responsible for Signor Mussolini's repudiation of Signor Grandi's policy at the disarmament conference. Long before the adjournment of the conference it was evident that the systematic exclusion of Italy from the conversations was bitterly resented at Rome. The reason of the exclusion was equally evident. It was that Signor Grandi had consistently, and without any doubt sincerely, proposed a drastic reduction of armaments (including the acceptance by other countries of the measures of qualitative disarmament imposed on Germany by the Treaty of Versailles) and had at once accepted the Hoover proposal unconditionally. No wonder that Signor Mussolini concluded that Signor Grandi's policy had failed! Nor was Italy alone in resenting the secret conversations. They were resented by the great majority of the delegations, who regarded them as an attempt on the part of a group of three Powers to impose their will on the conference. Certain delegations even protested to the president of the conference against them. In spite of these protests and these warnings Sir John Simon persisted, and the consequences of his persistence are before us. There is now a danger that Germany and Italy and perhaps also Russia may withdraw from the disarmament conference. It is unlikely that the publication of General von Schleicher's broadcast address and the articles of General Balbo and Signor Mussolini within a few days of one another was a mere accident. The most probable hypothesis is that of concerted action on the part of the German and Italian Governments to torpedo the disarmament conference on the pretext that it has failed.

Nothing is more incomprehensible in this affair than the conduct of the American delegation. What can have possessed them to join with two of the three delegations at the conference hostile to the Hoover proposal (the third being the Japanese) against the delegations in favor of that proposal? The most probable explanation is that they were hoodwinked, for it was painfully evident throughout the conference that they were hardly equal to their task. Perhaps they thought that the least bad result in the circumstances would be the unanimous acceptance of a resolution that, if it included little or nothing, at least did not exclude anything. In that case, they must have recognized their mistake when Germany and Russia voted against the resolution and Italy abstained.

The case of France is no mystery, but comes near to being a tragedy. Three months ago the majority of the French people declared unequivocally for disarmament and, in fact, for peace at any price. M. Herriot succeeded in thwarting their will and formed a cabinet that was a defiance of the popular verdict. Yet, although MM. Herriot and Paul-Boncour, especially the latter, are clearly under the thumb of General Weygand and the French general staff, even French policy at Geneva was less obstructionist than British policy. Had Sir John Simon been willing to accept the Hoover proposal as a basis of discussion, as the Germans, Italians, and Russians desired, the French delegation would almost certainly have agreed. Ten days ago I was convinced that the French people would not allow their will to be thwarted much longer and that the autumn would see the advent in France of a government ready to give a bold lead in the matter of disarmament, but now the future is uncertain. It is too soon to say what effect the change in German and Italian policy will have on French opinion. Signor Mussolini's article has delighted the French nationalists as much as General von Schleicher's broadcast address—see, for example, M. Saint-Price's significant comments in the *Journal* of August 8. They are already sure that the great victory of the Left last May is annulled and that, in the words of *L'Ordre,* France is recovering from her "pacifist hypnosis." One can but hope that they are mistaken, but one cannot be at all sure of it. M. Léon Blum is undoubtedly right in thinking that the change in German and Italian policy is yet another reason for proposing drastic measures of general disarmament, which would necessarily involve effective international control. If the German and Italian Governments refused to accept their own proposals when made by other Powers, or refused to agree to effective international control, we should know where we were. If, on the other hand, they accepted both, France and all other countries would be provided with the best possible guaranty of "security" in existing circumstances, and, although war would not be abolished—for it can be abolished only by abolishing its causes—it would have been made much more difficult. But this is the language of reason, and experience has taught us that reason rarely directs human affairs.

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The Show Business
I. The Crisis in the Theater*

By JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

AT the present moment there are about seventy legitimate theaters in New York City. No other city has anything like so many and their existence is an outward sign of the fact that New York has been, for a decade past, the center of the world's theatrical activity. No one else produced anything like so many new plays as we and no other country could boast a group of young playwrights so obviously original and vigorous.

A glance at the newspaper any time during the summer just past would, however, have revealed the startling fact that only six or seven of these seventy theaters were actually in operation and there were periods during what should have been the height of last winter's season when thirty or forty playhouses were either dark or given over to vaudeville, burlesque, or moving-picture entertainments. In other words the flourishing theater of New York had come pretty near to collapse and, as a symbol of the fact, the house of Shubert —the most powerful factor in the American theatrical business—went into the hands of the receiver.

No one knows, of course, what this year will bring. Theatrical managers are notoriously good gamblers and they are making vigorous plans to try again. But how many of the new productions will actually succeed? Last year some one hundred and fifty made their bid for popularity but one hundred and twenty of them were acknowledged failures and, of the remaining thirty, a considerable number probably involved a net loss for their producers. If we leave the musical shows out, not more than ten or twelve plays were commercial successes and, under present conditions, the theater cannot continue long to operate on its present scale. Unless some change in its affairs takes place very soon many of the playhouses will have to be abandoned, many established actors will have to seek new professions, and Broadway will no longer astonish European visitors by the scale of its theatrical activities.

I do not want to be unduly sensational and, especially, I do not want to make the mistake of confusing the theater as a business institution with the theater as an art. We do not need the two hundred and fifty productions which make up a normal theatrical season. We do not need even the one hundred and fifty that were produced last year. A large number of the failures deserved to fail. Probably we do not need seventy theaters, and it is not certain that the importance of New York as a theatrical center would be decreased if a third or a half of them were to disappear. But neither do I want to take too romantic an attitude or to encourage the delusion that those who are interested in the art of the theater ought to be indifferent to its success as a business. As it is now constituted and as it probably will continue to be constituted for some time to come, the two are intimately related. Plays will not be produced unless they can pay for themselves, and the American theater was able to develop as it did during the last ten years *because* it was prosperous.

To a certain extent all artists depend upon the market for their products. Books can be published only because books can be sold. But the theater is the most expensive of the arts except opera, and it feels a business depression more quickly and seriously than any of the others. It costs from one to two thousand dollars to print a book. It costs from ten thousand on up to several hundred thousand to produce a theatrical exhibition. And the difference between those two sums is almost a measure of the difference between the extent to which the production of books and the production of plays is dependent upon large commercial success. It is easier to experiment with books because experiment there is so much less costly, and it is ridiculous for the spectator to take too lofty an attitude.

Broadway and Forty-second Street are today lined with burlesque shows which have sprung up since the beginning of the depression, and they may be taken as a symbol of what is likely to happen to the theatrical world of New York unless some steps are taken. A hard-pressed manager tends to produce only sure-fire hits and we know what a sure-fire hit is likely to be. Theoretically the depression should have made people more interested in serious things. Actually it has obviously had an opposite effect on the vast majority. Perhaps it has inclined a certain number of people to take economic and political subjects more seriously, but it has not inclined them to a greater interest in serious art. From the standpoint of the theatergoer that is the important result of the plight of the theater. He does not need two hundred and fifty productions a year. He does not need seventy theaters. But he does need a theater in which a certain number of intrinsically excellent plays are produced during a season. And the real danger is that these are the very ones which financial difficulties will squeeze out.

The next question is, of course, what can be done. And to that question there is no one simple answer. But in general terms the answer is that the theater must readjust itself to a change of conditions which is probably permanent—in part at least. What we did not entirely realize is the fact that the flourishing theater of the last few years was a part of the great boom; that its feverish activity was analogous to the feverish activity of the automobile and most other businesses. That does not mean that the immediate results were not good or that excellent plays were not produced just as excellent automobiles were turned out. What it does mean is that the whole activity was proportioned to a boom which could not last and carried on in a manner recklessly improvident. The theatrical business, like most other businesses, was being constantly expanded upon the assumption, not merely that it would continue indefinitely on the current scale, but that it would continue indefinitely to increase at the same rate at which it had been increasing.

The first and inevitable stage of the readjustment will

* The first of a series of four articles on The Show Business. Next week, The Show Business: What It Costs.

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be, I am sure, a deflation—particularly a real-estate deflation. Many of the theaters at the present moment dark will never, I think, be again continuously used for the purpose for which they were built. Many had been constructed quite recently and owed their existence to a flurry of construction provoked by a shortage of theaters a few years ago. But the over-supply which resulted from an exaggerated effort to meet the real need had already begun to be evident before the general depression occurred. Theaters, like most other things, had been produced beyond the need for even boom times, and when a depression began to be felt the already top-heavy structure was ready for immediate collapse, just as the already top-heavy structure of most industries was ready for collapse. The builders had positively asked for catastrophe and catastrophe is what they got.

The immediate result of the deflation is already evident. A few years ago it was impossible for any producer to get any theater without guaranteeing its owner at least four thousand dollars a week rent. Today any manager can get almost any theater on a purely percentage basis provided he can convince the owner that he has a ghost of a chance for success. And the only unfortunate part of the situation, the only thing which prevents the beneficent effect of cheap theaters from being felt more than it is, is the fact that many of them, having been taken over from mortgagees, are now in the hands of corporations whose members know so little of the theatrical business that they exercise very bad judgment both in letting and refusing to let the house to managers with a show to produce.

That situation will, however, undoubtedly work itself out, and a real-estate deflation ought to prove a very great help to the whole institution of the theater, which has been burdened with outrageous rents. In the course of that deflation fortunes will be lost, exactly as they will be lost in other major commercial enterprises. Some theaters will be dismantled and the general level of rents will be lowered. But however unfortunate that may be for the real-estate operator, it will represent an important gain to the manager and through him to the institution of the theater. That particular gain is one much needed for the simple reason that the thing most obviously wrong with the whole institution of our theater was the fantastic cost of production. In 1929 nothing was so much needed as a way of producing a play without involving a fortune in the gamble, and a decrease in the cost of a theater lease is one important step in the right direction.

However, rents were not, of course, the only things which cost too much. Everything about the theater business has been characterized by a kind of mad extravagant costliness. Managers were rich one year and broke the next; actors got very large salaries while they worked and did not work three-quarters of the time. Producers, most of them, worked on hunches and enthusiasm. They threw away vast sums on impossible productions that never opened and laid out thousands in a moment of exuberance only to regret it in moments of judgment. We have heard a good deal more about the absurd lavishness of Hollywood and it was more absurd than the lavishness of Broadway because it was a sort of super Broadway. But on a smaller scale the theatrical business was absurd in the same way that the moving-picture business was absurd. It existed in an atmosphere of gaudy projects and reckless wastes. Just now it is wondering whether or not it can get out of that atmosphere and learn to exist under saner conditions.

What it comes down to in the end is this: the New York theater is in much the same sort of plight that American business as a whole is in and the causes of the plight are in general the same, except for the fact that the theatrical business has always been more reckless, and unstable, than almost any other. If it reveals a capacity to reorganize itself as a result of the lessons learned the total effect may be very good. If it does not, it may go down in collapse and it is too soon to say of it (as it is too soon to say of American business as a whole) which course it is most likely to take. The depression may do us good—if we can survive it.

Back in the winter of 1930 when all the professional optimists were discounting each fresh wave of the depression as merely a salutary pause in the march of prosperity, someone remarked wisely: "One more healthy reaction and the patient will be dead." Something of the same sort occurs to me in connection with the theater. It will be better if it ever gets well. But it is not yet quite certain that it ever will.

In the Driftway

SLIGHTLY confused but aggressively "broadened" by a summer of foreign travel, the sight-seers are home again. And once more the Drifter is having to admit to those eager travelers who have seen every museum in Europe in three months how many sights he himself has missed, how often he has stopped short of a twelfth-century church for the ephemeral delights of a twentieth-century cafe; or wasted an entire afternoon watching chickens cross and recross the street of a French village while a chateau languished not a mile away. The Drifter, in fact, is such a confirmed non-sight-seer that his friends' lyrical descriptions of the wonders of the world arouse in him neither a sense of guilt at not having visited them when he could nor even a desire to rectify his oversight, but only a sense of weariness.

* * * * *

HIS happy state of imperviousness both to sights and to the scorn that sight-seers feel for him was not achieved, to be sure, in a day—it required one violent European tour. The Drifter can still remember the aching feet and the exhausted mind with which he went doggedly from museum to castle and back again; he cannot remember with any clearness any "sight" he saw. The Uffizi, to quote another rebellious sight-seer whose name he has forgotten, is to the Drifter a place where a thousand virgins and a thousand bambinos may be seen strangling each other. It is also the place where he learned that if one cannot stay away from museums one should at least go alone. Even the staunchest friendship can scarcely withstand a good-sized art gallery. The Drifter "did" the Uffizi one warm day with a trusted and understanding friend. Within ten minutes the expedition had resolved itself into a competition in which each irritated and irritating contestant was determined to see first, and to judge first, each one of a thousand pictures that neither one wanted to see anyway. It was only by an agreement to avoid museums that the friendship survived at all.

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FOR the most part the Drifter has been faithful to the spirit if not the letter of that agreement. Where formerly he used to look up sights in guide books and go to see them, now, if he happens to see a sight that interests him he looks it up. It is much less wearing. As for museums, he never enters one except when the desire to see a particular picture overcomes his gallery phobia. On such occasions, having found out exactly where the picture is hung, he firmly imagines himself to be wearing those blinders with which nervous horses are protected from extraneous sights, and goes, not at the hesitating museum pace that kills but as if he were late for an appointment, to the object of his visit.

THE DRIFTER

Correspondence

Colonel House and the War

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: On the appearance of the article in your issue of July 27, Wilson Was for War in March, 1916, I wrote a letter with regard to it to Colonel E. M. House. My letter and his reply may be of interest to your readers.

My Dear Colonel House:

I have just finished reading an article in *The Nation* of July 27, written by C. Hartley Grattan, entitled Wilson Was for War in March, 1916.

While this was not news to me, your having something to do with it is of great interest to me. In a letter written to Senator Robert M. La Follette by me some time in 1916, I told him that President Wilson was going to bring this country into the war against Germany. I was neither for Germany nor for the Allies. I was against war all my life.

I hope some of the things stated in *The Nation* are not true, or are exaggerated.

(Signed) LOUIS EDELMAN

Dear Dr. Edelman:

In reply to your letter, all I can say is that no one, at any time, was more fervently in favor of peace than I was.

It was merely a question of how best to bring it about and what to do to make the United States less liable to disaster in the future.

Mr. Grattan is mistaken in saying that I was prejudiced against the Germans. I had many friends there then and have them today, and am in frequent touch with them.

(Signed) E. M. HOUSE

Chesapeake Beach, Md., August 1 LOUIS EDELMAN

Concerning Mr. Lehman

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: A campaigner as overwhelmed with work as I now am finds it difficult to keep up with his own mail or even to answer such letters concerning himself as you have carried. But I do want to pause between trips to enter a very earnest protest against *The Nation's* brand of support of a new political realignment which permits it to give the impression that in a somewhat halting manner it prefers Lehman to Waldman as a candidate for Governor of New York. I respect Lieutenant-Governor Lehman's character and ability, but from the standpoint of the fundamental needs of America it becomes all the more dangerous that so good a man should be the window dressing for so corrupt and incompetent a party. Whatever are Mr. Lehman's virtues, he has been the unprotesting member of an Administration which has contemptuously ignored the demands for unemployment relief which were pressed by Louis Waldman, the Socialist candidate for Governor. In this case emphatically it is the party and not the man which counts, or at any rate, counts first. I say this with pride in the ability and character of our Socialist candidate. No one in the State has a better knowledge of State affairs or has fought harder for measures *The Nation* would approve than Mr. Waldman. He would join me in urging, however, that the dominant consideration, as *The Nation* itself has admitted or nearly admitted in the past, is the building of an aggressive party to represent the genuine interests of the masses of workers with hand and brain.

New York, August 24 NORMAN THOMAS

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: *The Nation* displays its customary brand of limping liberalism in its indorsement of Herbert H. Lehman's candidacy for Governor of New York State. This time it cannot even offer an apology of not knowing better; it admits that the "mere election of as good a man as Mr. Lehman will not improve the Democratic Party or make it worthy of public confidence."

Of course, *The Nation* strives for political realism. But this time the temptation was overwhelming. It is not often that modest bankers with liberal tendencies run for office. When they do, they must be rewarded, even at the cost of perpetuating in power a band of plunderers often castigated by *The Nation* itself. *The Nation's* indorsement of Democratic Lehman reveals its subconscious distrust of its own convictions.

New York, August 24 WILL MASLOW
E. MICHAEL WHITE

The Centralia Prisoners

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: The Centralia Publicity Committee, Box 37, Centralia, Washington, is in desperate need of funds to continue its efforts for the release of the five men who have already served thirteen years of undeserved imprisonment. The only salary paid by the committee is the twelve dollars a week on which the devoted secretary, C. S. Smith, manages to subsist. The death of Elmer Smith, who literally gave his life for these men, was a great loss. Cannot enough of us pledge ourselves to send the committee one dollar a month so that his work in their behalf shall not have been in vain? FREDERICK A. BLOSSOM

Long Island City, N. Y., August 3

Contributors to This Issue

WAYNE GARD lives in Des Moines, Iowa; he teaches at Drake University and writes regularly for *Vanity Fair* and frequently for other magazines.

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NORMAN THOMAS, Socialist candidate for President, is the author of "America's Way Out: A Program for Democracy."

BENJAMIN GINZBURG is the author of "The Adventure of Science."

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Books

But Plato

By JOSEPH AUSLANDER

But Plato is a dogma: Plato's power
Is weak against this twilight and this hush
When earth and sky and water seem to flush
With some fine sanguine impulse of the hour,
Some blood of meditation that shall flower
Into a flame of stars, into a rush
Of radiant doctrine from a dazzled bush
Where the bird turns his leaf into a tower.
And as for Aristotle—oh, but here,
Scenting the sweet-fern and the bilberry blows,
The leopard frog knows more than that Greek knows,
Melodious and squat philosopher:
And still the bush is blazing like a rose—
And still the voice is thundering at your ear!

Bowdlerized Lawrence

Lady Chatterley's Lover. By D. H. Lawrence. Authorized Abridged Edition. Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

A FEW weeks ago, in these pages, Mr. Morris Ernst reviewed impressively the unbroken chain of legal defeats to which the vice-snoopers have been subjected in recent years, and he summed up by remarking:

> Since 1915 the leading vice agency of the United States, the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice, has failed to gain a conviction in a single case where a book was published with an established publisher's imprint, or where the book had been openly sold by the retailers and reviewed by the press.

Against that encouraging record we must set the present edition of "Lady Chatterley's Lover." It is called, on the paper jacket and on the title page, the "authorized abridged edition." And on the jacket there is also printed a statement by Frieda Lawrence, the author's widow, which I quote in full:

> It is a relief to know that you are bringing out the only authorized edition of "Lady Chatterley's Lover" in the United States, after all the expurgated pirated editions. Lawrence considered it his greatest work, and I feel that even in this revised form it has all the beauty of the original edition, and that it suggests to the greatest possible extent the original's strength and vigor.

And that is all. There is no preface, no publisher's note.

When we read the book, what do we find? It is abridged indeed, but the deletions are of only one thing. With complete thoroughness, and with surgical accuracy, the editor has removed every description of the physical act of sex. He has removed every four-letter word to which a censor could possibly object. Even this might be forgivable, if the reader had still been permitted to know at just what points his chastity was being protected from the depraving influence of the original volume. But though the editor occasionally inserts a row of asterisks where whole pages of matter are missing, the reader unfamiliar with the original edition is left to conjecture that these are the editor's asterisks and not the author's. And there is no consistency even in the use of asterisks: whole pages are dropped with no hint of the fact whatever.

It is misleading, then, to call this an "abridged" edition. The honest word is "expurgated." It is doubly misleading for the publishers to print Mrs. Lawrence's statement that this is the only "authorized" edition "after all the expurgated pirated editions." The implication of such a statement is that the present edition is *not* expurgated. And even to call the present volume expurgated would not be enough. It is expurgated and bowdlerized.

Let us see some of the things that have happened to it. The first omission, I believe, is that of the passage describing Connie's first intimacy with Michaelis. The omission of this, and of descriptions of succeeding intimacies, makes Connie's later aversion to Michaelis unintelligible. The omission of every passage describing any of her physical relations with the game-keeper, or her emotions during them, leaves her love for him largely unaccounted for. As the whole story turns upon her love for him, the omission is rather important; this becomes, indeed, a clear case of "Hamlet" with the Prince left out. As for the bowdlerization, one becomes aware of it before the end of Chapter IV. One character remarks:

> "Me? Oh, intellectually I believe in having a good heart, a lively intelligence, and the courage to say things in front of a lady."

In the real book, the character believed in having another organ in addition to a good heart. And he did not say "things."

It cannot be denied that for the most part the euphemistic substitutes are orthodox. Connie's "heart" is made to do constant service for another part of her; and "love," ambiguous and all-embracing, takes the place of a more specific verb. But this substitution often makes Lawrence's words seem meaningless. What does the game-keeper mean by "cold-hearted loving"? What does he mean when he tells Connie: "You like loving all right: but you want it to be called something grand and mysterious, just to flatter your own self-importance"? And surely the editor is sometimes much too timid. Has "body" itself become an obscene word? When Lady Chatterley tells her lover, "I liked your body," the present editor changes it, meaninglessly in the context, to "I liked you." And why a sentence like "The Italians are not passionate: passion has deep reserves" is omitted in Chapter XVII I cannot even imagine, unless Mussolini's dictatorship is wider than I thought it was.

Let us admit that there is a relative justification for the present book. The authorities will not permit the original edition to be sent to this country; it is certain that, if it were openly published here just as it was written, the publisher would be prosecuted. What has actually happened, therefore, is that several pirated editions have been brought out here, and sold through underground and bootleg channels. And recently one particularly unscrupulous publisher brought the book out openly, bowdlerized to get by the censors, but with no acknowledgment either of the theft or of the bowdlerization. It was sold in many of the so-called respectable bookstores, whose owners, presumably, would have indignantly refused to handle a book in which the organs of the human body, and the act by which children are conceived, were described in good plain English, but who thought it quite all right to act as receivers of stolen goods.

Under these circumstances, the regular publisher of Lawrence was certainly justified in at least partly protecting himself and Lawrence's widow by bringing out an expurgated edition of his own. But would it not have been better to tell the reader, in a publisher's note, candidly and plainly just what the limitations of the present volume were, and why it was being published? Would it not have been fairer, both to the reader and to Lawrence's reputation, to let the reader know precisely how much and where something was being held back from him? Would it not have been better, instead of bowdlerizing, to have used dashes—to have printed, for example, one of the lines quoted here, like this:

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> "Me? Oh, intellectually I believe in hasing a good heart, a chirpy ——, a lively intelligence, and the courage to say —— in front of a lady."

Would it not have been better to print it so throughout, letting the reader know that the dashes were not Lawrence's, or even blacking out the words, as in the recent "Censored Mother Goose," to emphasize what a nasty and ridiculous thing censorship at bottom is? It might even be possible, now, to print the book in its original form. With the imposing list of court decisions already built up, with the liberties permitted to novelists like Hemingway and Dos Passos on the one hand and to sex writers like Mary Ware Dennett, Marie Stopes, Van de Velde, Dickinson, and Beam, and all the psychoanalysts on the other, it would seem to be impossible for the courts to rule, with any consistency, at least, against "Lady Chatterley's Lover."

I do not wish to be understood as accusing Mr. Knopf of lack of courage in this matter. That sort of accusation is too easy for perfectly safe people to make. Anyone who makes that charge should be prepared either to buy the rights himself or to offer to defray the expenses of the inevitable legal prosecution. I am merely saying that this emasculated edition should at least have been presented for exactly what it was. It is not enough to reply that half a loaf is better than none, or that many fine passages remain. The simple truth is that the editor has taken out precisely the passages and the words for the sake of which Lawrence really wrote the book. There is no need to ask what Lawrence himself would have thought of this edition. He has already told us in his little pamphlet on "Pornography and Obscenity":

> The whole question of pornography seems to me a question of secrecy. . . . The insult to the human body, the insult to a vital human relationship! . . . Away with the secret! . . . The only way to stop the terrible mental itch about sex is to come out quite simply and naturally into the open with it.

The editor of the present volume, as I have hinted, has been a skilful surgeon. Out of "Lady Chatterley's Lover" he has carved nothing but the heart. The heart? I find I am using the language of the editor himself. Lawrence would have been more accurate.

HENRY HAZLITT

A History of Shakespeare

A History of Shakespearian Criticism. By Augustus Ralli. Oxford University Press. Two volumes. $12.

THE history of Shakespearian criticism is the history of Shakespeare—is the story, that is to say, of how a great man came into that sort of existence with which we endow anything by thinking about it. Such a story can be told in either of two ways. It may have a plot and develop around an idea; or it may be a mere chronicle of discoverable events. Mr. Ralli has chosen the chronicle form, and in so doing he has missed an opportunity to write the clever book which someone doubtless is destined to write. For the criticism of Shakespeare has had its dramatic moments; it has known sensational reversals, and it has revealed the characters not only of critics but of countries.

Mr. Ralli has not been clever then; but he has been enormously useful. He has begun at the beginning, with the first known mention of Shakespeare's sonnets and plays by Francis Meres in 1598, and has plowed straight on through time to Lascelles Abercrombie, his last commentator, who in "The Idea of Great Poetry" (1925) discussed certain moral implications of Shakespeare's tragic art. He has followed a triple course through England, France, and Germany (the United States falling for his purposes within the boundaries of England); and in his progress he has summarized every important or half-important volume, essay, preface, annotation, or article bearing upon his subject. He has digested the work of three hundred and fifteen critics, and digested it thoroughly.

This is not to say that Mr. Ralli is a critic himself, for such a man would find such a labor impossible—or if he did force himself to perform it, he would fail to keep that calmness which is Mr. Ralli's great virtue. A person of finer gifts would not have so fair a mind; he would add to this account, he would subtract from that, he would always be throwing a high light somewhere. Mr. Ralli plods along with a steady lantern which no wind of doctrine can blow out. The result is not a contribution to Shakespearian criticism; it is exactly what it pretends to be, a survey of that criticism as far as the year 1925. If Mr. Ralli has any position at all it is the idolatrous one—a bad one for any other purpose, perhaps, but good enough for the one in hand.

More than half of his eleven hundred pages are devoted to the past forty-six years. This may seem a sin against proportion, but it is these latter years which we are likely to know least well, and Mr. Ralli has not been unwise in paying so much attention to critics who may never again be as important as they are at the passing moment. Here again he is above all things useful.

His index could be fuller, and there could have been a bibliography of critical works; as it is, the reader is compelled to compile his own from the footnotes. But these are slight demerits in a work to which every student of Shakespeare will be indebted until such time as its inevitable successor is composed.

MARK VAN DOREN

The Fetish of Duty

Night Flight. By Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. Translated from the French by Stuart Gilbert. The Century Company. $1.75.

"NIGHT FLIGHT," winner of the French Prix Femina, is a tense and brilliantly written story, fusing the sensations of a company of air pilots, engaged in transporting mail by night over the gigantic prairies and mountain ranges of South America. Both the glamor and the terror of night-flying at high altitudes are invested by the author with a kind of metaphysical poetry which is nevertheless entirely concrete and convincing. "Here for the first time," Christopher Morley says, "an airplane enters into imaginative literature."

But this evocation of the beauty, the wonder, and the peril of night-flying, remarkable as it is, is not the heart of the book. Its moral and imaginative center is the figure of Rivière. Rivière is not a pilot at all, but the chief of the airport, the director, in a sense the creator, of the thrilling and sometimes fatal night flights. The book is a glorification of the character of Rivière, with whom the author has clearly made a personal identification. Rivière is a transcendental martinet, for whom the service is a kind of mystic categorical imperative. In order that the South American airlines may compete in speed with other systems of transport, in order that mail may travel with unnecessary rapidity from Bahia Blanca to Bordeaux, Rivière drives his men like machines, brutalizes them, intimidates them, sends them to their deaths. He applies the West Point-Prussian disciplinary system to the business of transporting mail. It is not that he is inhuman or greedy: no, he kills men for the sake of a pure idea, which he is never quite able to define even to himself. There is something in him that has gone hard and hopeless. His spirit is dead; and in order to hide from himself this deadness, this

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essential solitude in a world of living men, he apotheosizes Work. "The work in progress was all that mattered." He says of his men: "They need to be urged on toward a hardy life, with its sufferings and its joys; only that matters." And he thinks: "We behave as if there were something of higher value than human life. . . . But what thing?" He never succeeds in answering the question. There is no answer. His nearest approach to it is the Conradian formula of Duty, conceived in superhuman terms, Duty performed regardless of whether or not it is understood by Rivière or his underlings, Duty apart from its personal and social significance.

Rivière is a sick man, a rotting man, like all who are fascinated by the spectacle of pure power and pure efficiency divorced from beneficent ends. But the author does not admit it, does not wish to see it. Instead he holds up Rivière as the supreme mystic hero. After Rivière (though, like the Russian nobleman's, his heart is breaking) has stoically endured the death of his favorite pilot Fabien, the author ends the tale: "Rivière went back to his work and, as he passed, the clerks quailed under his stern eyes; Rivière the Great, Rivière the Conqueror, bearing his heavy load of victory."

It is disheartening to see a great artist like André Gide (who has just signed Rolland's manifesto against war) praising this book in fascist terms, making a virtue of its febrile heroism, declaring that "Man's happiness lies not in freedom, but in his acceptance of a duty." Can he not see that Saint-Exupéry's admittedly eloquent deification of mere will and energy leads straight to Von Treitschke and the megalomania of Il Duce? Does he not see that this lurid heroic sentiment can easily be impressed into service and that by its empty witchery men can be confused, blinded, and sent straight to their deaths? This is no mere story of adventure—would that it were!—but a dangerous book. It is dangerous because it celebrates a pernicious idea by disguising it as a romantic emotion. It is dangerous because it enlists a fine imaginative talent in the defense of a spiritual toryism.

CLIFTON FADIMAN

Profits and Power

The Power Fight. By Stephen Raushenbush. The New Republic. $1.

THIS book is a model of its kind, and its kind is tremendously important in a day when the literature of generalities and the discussions of broad economic planning so far outrun the constructively critical examination of particular key industries and the problems they present. There can be no need of argument that among key industries electric power ranks very high; decidedly it is in the public mind and it is in politics. Mr. Raushenbush could have chosen no better subject for his lucid and vivid exposition. He has the gift of handling dry figures, not only so that they mean something but that what they mean becomes exciting. One feels the careful objectivity of his inquiry, yet he is never guilty of the futility of trying to discuss a question of such social importance as if our judgments of values were no more involved than in a discussion of the measurements of the craters on the moon.

At once the book establishes itself as a necessary guide to any one who would discuss the power industry. It is an amazingly compact and comprehensive handbook of significant facts—facts which the power companies cannot dispose of by the cry of "Bolshevik" and the rather clumsy lying in which they have indulged. (I write as the victim or beneficiary of false or irrelevant attacks which on occasion have at least guaranteed me a big audience!)

It would be a great disservice to any reader to give him a few quotations or even to summarize the author's comment so that mistakenly he will feel that he can dispense with the book. Instead, I shall point out what it does to our stock American arguments for private ownership of public utilities.

Briefly, these arguments are somewhat as follows: Private ownership rests upon and stimulates private initiative; it more or less automatically assures efficiency and honesty in operation; it gives the engineer a chance that would be denied him under a bureaucratic and wasteful form of public ownership such as we must expect from our politicians. Against the temptation to charge extortionate rates the regulatory commissions of the states are effective.

Never was a case more thoroughly disproved by the facts. The electric industry in America has indeed been a particular beneficiary of our extraordinary scientific progress. That progress has long since depended upon the careful work of the engineer; not the hunch or the greed of the entrepreneur. Already the power industry has become a quasi-monopoly. There is in it no question of individualism versus collectivism. If there is any return of competition it will be by small publicly owned plants. Private owners will lack the financial and political strength to get into the field now so closely knit by intricate systems of holding companies, most of them falling within some big banking sphere of influence, so that three groups—the Morgan-Bonbright-National City, the Chase National-Harris, Forbes, and the Insulls control 59.6 per cent of the industry's production. Eight more control 25.57 per cent of the installed capacity. To talk of individual initiative in this collectivism of financial control is about as meaningless as to talk of individual initiative in the telephone monopoly.

These allied interests through the National Electric Light Association and various other groups have sought to debauch and prostitute democracy by an extraordinary use of propaganda by which in press, schools, colleges, and civic organizations, advertising—dishonest—advertising is masqueraded as objective statement of facts. Mr. Raushenbush reviews the more flagrant evidence of this before the Federal Trade Commission. This subject had previously been discussed by him in "High Power Propaganda" and, more recently and in more detail by Dr. Ernest Gruening and by Jack Levin, so that it is probably fairly familiar to *Nation* readers. It is one of many dramatic proofs that the ignorance or misinformation of democracy is deliberately cultivated by these who then deride it, just as the corruption of democracy is primarily the work of those who exploit it.

Even so, it would be hard for any Tammany to steal what the power groups have legally appropriated. Mr. Raushenbush's analysis of the financing of the companies and the rate structure is a beautiful piece of clear exposition of the art of exploitation sanctioned by inefficient regulatory commissions and complacent courts. What can be done by holding companies to write up and conceal profits, how imaginary reproduction costs figure in valuations, what 8 per cent return on capitalization means for holders of common stock—and to the consumers!—is here set forth with a wealth of illustration. One chart of fourteen companies shows a write-up of 80 per cent over book costs in the process of effecting mergers. The Committee on Public Utility Rates of the National Association of Railway and Utility Commissioners has definitely and categorically rejected the comfortable picture that such write-ups of capital do not affect rates. Emphatically they do. Perhaps the most telling point in Mr. Raushenbush's analysis is his proof that now the private companies take from us, the consumers, about a million dollars a day more to pay for capital than would be charged through the use of government credit. This sum steadily increases. Looking to the future Mr. Raushenbush draws a picture which he thus summarizes:

> We have seen here how the electric utilities are in a position where they can legally charge for the next thirty

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years close to $14,000,000,000 more than would be charged through the use of government credit. Or, charging the consumers no more than the private companies, government ownership would reduce the charges for money to zero at the end of thirty years. In order to make secure the dividends on their common stock large extra sums are allowed them out of rates, above and beyond the actual cost of the money. These sums pile up cumulatively, and the amount of excess earnings required from the consumers to safeguard these dividends increases annually. But the operating utilities have now been put into a position where the managers do not themselves control such matters. The control is in the banking houses behind the holding companies. They are not always interested in securing money for the operating utilities in the cheapest market. They make some of their largest profits in ways expensive to the operating utilities. They constantly attempt to gain the benefits from both premiums and discounts. They are in a position to force operating utilities to accept short-term loans at high rates of interest, and then themselves to borrow from the operating companies at very low rates. They have fought control of security issues successfully in over half the States and are not inactive in attempting to repeal or weaken it in those States where it has been attempted.

One more point to complete the picture of "efficient" private operation. Harassed commissions cannot pass on competence in management. Incompetence or deliberate manipulation of operating costs to conceal profits is rewarded by high rates! Not the stockholders but the consumers suffer.

Against this attack on the public pocketbook our defenses are weak—how weak only a careful reading of the record will make plain. Cities are usually hamstrung by State laws and commissions, arbitrary insistence on counting debts incurred for acquiring public utilities as if they were part of the non-productive debts and hence subject to the debt limits; rules requiring a two-thirds vote to sanction a bond issue for acquiring public utilities, etc. Commissions, State and federal, have become the refuge for the utilities and bear their indorsement. There may be logically certain things which would strengthen the power of the commissions, but neither their essential nature nor the constitutional limitations of one federal and forty-eight State governments, still less the history of achievement under commissions, gives any real hope of solving our problem by strengthening commissions.

By contrast public operation, or mixed public and private operation as in Britain, Germany, Canada, and many of our own cities, works well. Most readers will be particulary thankful to Mr. Raushenbush for giving us the facts concerning successful public operation. He effectively disposes of the familiar argument that the notoriously lower rates for domestic consumers in Ontario under public ownership are at the cost of low tax returns to the government and high charges to industries. In this matter high-power propagandists have done some tall lying.

Equally valuable is the author's account of Muscle Shoals and Boulder Dam. The Hoover Administration and some of its agencies and their reports come in for caustic criticism. In discussing the famous report of the War Department on Muscle Shoals he observes: "It looks very much as if the engineers in the War Department did what they were told to do, and did it badly."

In short, the conventional arguments for the power trust are left without the proverbial leg to stand on. We still have, however, the question, granting all this, what at this late date can we do? Here the author gives us excellent hints in his description of the possibility of effective competition by such public developments as Muscle Shoals and Boulder Dam, and smaller plants and distributing systems which power districts and cities can economically set up. He discusses optimistically

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the use of the public corporation to avoid direct public operation by political authorities. (The Port Authority of New York is an example.)

Yet here one wishes Mr. Raushenbush had gone farther and sketched more boldly a possible comprehensive plan. Shall we seek to buy out the existing trusts with the federal government owning the great control plants and transmission lines, while municipalities and power districts take over distribution? Or can we get satisfactory results by developing a competition which will ultimately drive private companies, now so arrogantly intrenched, to surrender? What is the relation of power to the coal problem? Must we deal with power and perhaps other forms of public ownership by further amendment to the Constitution, remembering that in the Eighteenth Amendment we have a precedent for rather ruthless confiscation, or destruction of private-property values? Can we successfully fight the power trust as an isolated issue, leaving untouched the general acceptance of the righteousness of the profit system? After all, the power trust is in no sense worse than some other forms of private ownership—perhaps it has fewer sins to its charge than our banking system or than the chaotic, competitive, private ownership of bituminous coal.

These and other problems demand answer. No one in America can answer them better than Stephen Raushenbush. May we not hope for the development of his suggestive chapter "A Program of Peace With Power" into a new volume?

NORMAN THOMAS

Ethics Without Inspiration

Ethics. By Nicolai Hartmann. Translation by Stanton Coit. Volume I: *Moral Phenomena.* The Macmillan Company. $3.50.

PROFESSOR Hartmann's "Ethics" of which the present volume represents a translation of the first section, is an outstanding and important contribution to philosophy. It is written with a power of analysis rarely found today in philosophical literature, and it has in addition qualities of eloquence which under other circumstances would have made the book a work of genius. What seems to be missing, however, is a philosophical point of view capable of moving the reader and inspiring him to new spiritual heights. For this reason the work is likely to prove more valuable for its criticism of rival philosophies and for its incidental *aperçus* than for its constructive thesis.

The fault, as the reviewer sees it, derives from the tenets of the school of thought with which the author is associated. This is the school of phenomenology which has been developed in Germany under the leadership of Professor Husserl in the guise of a realistic reaction against the psychologism introduced into modern philosophy by Kant. The realism of the school is, however, not the ordinary empirical realism or naturalism, but a logical realism of essences directly intuited by consciousness. In their emphasis upon the objective rather than the subjective character of the phenomena given in mind, they pride themselves indeed on going back to Plato, but they lack his unifying drive, and the net result of their analysis is to break up the world arbitrarily into fields of self-existent essences without a principle of movement and without a principle of concretion behind them.

In ethics, where the point of view of the phenomenalists approaches that of the Anglo-American school of "values," the weakness manifests itself in the lack of a spiritual drive. Ethics becomes indistinguishable from a contemplation of aesthetic essences *à la* Santayana. There is none of the missionary quest for an all-highest, such as Santayana objected to in Platonism; without it, however, ethics loses all meaning. Professor Hartmann's book contains excellent critiques of the fallacies of empirical ethics, such as egoism, altruism, and utilitarianism. There is an emphasis on the a priori and ideal self-existence of ethical values. But on the crucial question of the relativity of values—that is to say, the relativity for different cultures and different stages of progress—Dr. Hartmann's message breaks down. Instead of giving us a conception of the relative as constituting stages in the progress toward an absolute, the author treats the whole problem descriptively as if it were analogous to the relation of the relative and the absolute in a system of physics. Any one who comes to the book with a troubled conscience and in quest of a way of life is likely to be grievously disappointed. Instead of an indication of a highest good, he will find a discussion of the properties of "valuational space"!

The fault in the message, as we have said, does not destroy the value of the book from other points of view. But it necessarily confinfies its appeal to the student of philosophy who is more or less professionally oriented.

BENJAMIN GINZBURG

Shorter Notices

The Ripening. By Colette. Translated from the French by Ida Zeitlin. Farrar and Rinehart. $2.

The unimaginative greed and the imperfect scholarship of American publishers have recently been responsible for the foisting upon the public of a good deal of mediocre Colette. "The Ripening," however, is one of her finer novels and may be recommended to those who have already acquired a taste for this remarkable writer. Like so many of her books it is a study in adolescence, and particularly in adolescent love. Trembling between the worlds of childhood and maturity, sensitive and brutal as animals, secretive, sensual, wise, brooding—her fifteen-year-old Vinca and her sixteen-year-old Philippe will perhaps appear precocious, even decadent to Americans whose emotional childhood is indefinitely prolonged and whose shallow adolescence finds its exact interpretation in the shallow pages of a Booth Tarkington. But there can be little doubt of the genuineness of Colette's insight into the turbulent savage minds of her young boys and girls. It is true that only France can produce them and only a Frenchwoman, perhaps, interpret them; but so skilful is her art that the appeal of these children is made universal. Her whole concern, it would at first appear, is with the senses. It is not into the hearts of her characters that she looks, but at their nerve-ends. Yet from these shudders of the epidermis, "these pleasures," as she has elsewhere noted, "which we lightly term physical," she extracts a whole universe of psychological insights and emotional notations which are of the same order though not of the same depth as those of Marcel Proust. Colette is a writer to be read and reread; there is far more in her than would appear on the surface.

The Indifferent Ones. By Alberto Moravia. Translated by Aida Mastrangelo. E. P. Dutton and Company. $2.50.

The praise heaped on this novel in its native land is in part explained by the comparatively degenerate state of contemporary fascist literature. Strangely enough, in Mussolini's Italy, where the virtues of vigor, optimism, and strength have been established by police decree, Moravia's book, a record of futility, weariness, and despair, has been enormously popular. Its central situation—that of the lover who forsakes his aging mistress for the fresher body of her daughter—reeks of the rottenness of D'Annunzio's era. But the characters are not animated by D'Annunzio's passion; they are, as the title suggests, indifferent, tired even of their own decadence. They represent a class, as

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Moravia makes clear, which has lost confidence in itself. Their sensuality is half-hearted; their commercial acumen has withered to a desperate, clawing greed; they are devoid of loyalty to self, family, class, or country. Their subconscious desire is to die, to destroy what they hate most—themselves. Thus their very blood anticipates the stern judgment of history. Though his book is boring, Moravia has succeeded in indicting Italy's decaying upper middle class. It is astonishing that Il Duce should have permitted this morbid and life-denying novel to circulate freely among the inheritors of the tradition of the Caesars.

Song and Its Fountains. By Æ. The Macmillan Company. $1.25.

This is a somewhat involved and emotional statement of Æ's philosophy and theory of aesthetics. For Mr. Russell, beauty is the "bridal night of soul and body," and to be arrived at through the practice of meditation. This philosopher and poet finds that the certainty of the perfect dream-state dims as one grows older, that only the child obtains it easily, that the adult, to create, must strive always to sink back into that state of mind in which the subconscious predominates. But Mr. Russell makes use of no psychological terms in analyzing the creative state of mind; his tendency is toward a very obscure metaphysics. A dream which he actually had as a child becomes symbolic to him of the "circle of light" toward which he must strive if he is to sing out of a kind of trance. And for him the process of creation must take place in a kind of trance. The intellect plays little part in this poet's writings; they spring from emotional absorption in a feeling which instantly becomes significant to him when it seems to flow out of and toward the Vast.

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